

Professional Statement. Leeds Physician Associates.

Study in the field of healthcare is unique in its privileges and responsibilities. The following ethical code lays down principles and guidance to help you achieve professional and academic success. You should familiarise yourself with the Code of Conduct for Physician Associate Studies:

<https://www.fparcp.co.uk/about-fpa/news/code-of-conduct-for-physician-associates>

1. I will always treat patients, tutors, professionals and fellow students with politeness and consideration respecting their views, privacy, and dignity.

Guidance Notes

As a student of the University of Leeds, you have the right to learn in an environment that is free from harassment, bullying and victimization. The Equality Policy Unit (EPU) defines harassment as 'unwanted and unreciprocated offensive behaviour towards a person or group.' Verbal abuse, jokes, physical contact, sexual advances, and embarrassing/insensitive comments are considered harassment if such behaviour is unwanted and the recipient feels harassed.

2. I will not allow my personal beliefs to interfere with my professional or personal behaviour.

Guidance Notes

You are to act and treat without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, colour, gender, race, religion, nationality, culture, sexual orientation, disability or socio-economic status. Listen to and respect the views of other people, which may differ from your own. Be aware none of us are free from prejudice of some kind. Self-awareness prevents it influencing our actions.

3. I will respect and protect confidential information without exception.

Guidance Notes

Confidentiality is central to trust between health care professionals [HCP] and patients. Without this trust the practice of medicine is all but impossible. It may take very little for someone overhearing a conversation to know who you are talking about. You must not share identifiable information about patients where you can be overheard, for example, in a public place or in an internet chat forum. You should not share passwords or leave patients' records, either on paper or on screen unattended where they can be seen by other people. Written references to patients should be anonymised.

Confidentiality is not absolute and there are circumstances in which it can be breached; you should be aware of your obligations and where you can seek help in this matter:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/30587.asp

4. I will always introduce myself correctly as a physician associate student or student physician associate and respect the right of patients to refuse to participate in teaching. I will not exploit that consent for my own purpose.

Guidance Notes

It is the right of every patient to refuse to participate in teaching, although most are happy to agree to help. Patients should be treated as equals in this area and not as a resource for students to exploit for their own learning needs.

5. I will recognise the limits of my professional competence

Guidance Notes

Be aware of the limitations of your knowledge and skills. Do not give information to a patient about any aspect of their care unless you have been given permission to do so. Carrying out procedures must always be done after relevant training and with the knowledge of a supervising professional and only with patient consent. You should have a low threshold for asking for help and advice from senior members of the healthcare team.

6. I will be honest and trustworthy in all matters

Guidance Notes

Probity means being honest and trustworthy, and acting with integrity. You need to ensure that your behaviour justifies the trust that patients and the public place in the medical profession. You should therefore bring attention to any concerns about, or errors in your clinical work in a timely and appropriate manner. Be honest when writing reports, not plagiarise others' work, and not misrepresent your qualifications or abilities. You must comply with UK laws and report to the School of Medicine any encounters with the police.

Lapses may lead to Fitness to Practise proceedings, which could result in you being asked to delay graduation or leave the School of Medicine. The School of Medicine will try to support you where we can, but concealing or lying about such behaviour will be treated severely.

7. I will present an appropriate personal appearance and maintain good hygiene practices.

Guidance Notes

Always wear your identification badge and follow the dress code for clinical areas. If in doubt seek advice from your tutor. Patients may need to see your face to aid with lip reading and facial expression is an important part of communication. Keeping your face uncovered allows correct identification by patients, staff and colleagues. You must follow local guidelines for hand hygiene procedures in teaching and clinical areas and practice good personal hygiene at all times.

8. I will act quickly to protect patients from risk if I have good reason to believe that a colleague or I may not be fit to practise.

Guidance Notes

Studying and practising in the field of healthcare is very demanding and that may at times affect your mental health and well-being. If you feel that you or a colleague are having difficulties, please seek advice as early acknowledgement can prevent a problem deteriorating and allow support to be given. If you feel that a fellow HCP or colleague is behaving in a way that suggests they are not fit to practise, please seek advice from the School of Medicine or a senior professional. This is a core aspect of professional behaviour. Colluding with the concealing of such behaviour will never help the affected individual, and may put patients at risk.

9. I will act to inform the School of Medicine if I observe what I perceive to be poor or unethical clinical practice.

Guidance Notes

Occasionally on placements students may observe clinicians acting in a way which they may believe to be unsafe or unethical. In such a circumstance if the student is unable to gain a satisfactory explanation for such behaviour or feels unable to challenge the clinician they should inform the School of Medicine.

10. I will take responsibility for my health

Guidance Notes

You should register with a GP. Your own poor health may put patients and colleagues at risk. You should seek and follow advice from a suitably qualified professional about your health. This is particularly important if you think you may have a serious condition, or if the treatment you receive may affect your judgment or performance. You should also ensure that you are immunised against common serious communicable diseases if vaccines are available and recommended. You must avoid abusing alcohol and other mind-altering substances.

11. I will avoid unprofessional behaviour on social media websites

Social media can blur the boundary between your public and professional life. You should consider adopting conservative privacy settings where these are available but be aware that not all information can be protected on the web. The ethical and legal duty to protect patient confidentiality applies equally on the internet as to other media. Never post informal, personal or derogatory comments about patients, your teachers or other students on public internet forums. These may lay you open to charges of libel. You should be very cautious accepting a Facebook friend request, or similar activity on other platforms, from current or former patients. You should be conscious of your online image and how it may impact on your reputation and that of the profession. If you have any doubt about posting something, do not do it. The following is a link to the BMA advice.

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/ethics/medical-students-ethics-toolkit/12-students-and-social-media>

12. I will maintain appropriate relationships with colleagues and patients.

Guidance Notes

Romantic or sexual relationships between you and your teachers are not appropriate. You must not use your position as a student Physician Associate to establish or pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship with a patient or someone close to them. Such actions are regarded as abuse of a position of trust and dealt with under fitness to practice.

13. I will comply with the University's attendance policy and complete my academic requirements as set out by the School.

Guidance Notes

Persistent unauthorised absences or neglect of academic obligations may result in advisory meetings and Fitness to Practise proceedings. Permission for planned absences must wherever possible be sought and approved in advance. If this is not possible (e.g. unforeseen illness), you should follow the School of Medicine absence procedures at the earliest opportunity. It is a matter of professionalism that you should complete course evaluation forms in a timely and thoughtful manner. This enables improvements in the course which will benefit yourselves and future students.

14. I will keep up-to-date on local and national policies relating to my physician associate education

Faculty of Physician Associates website:

<http://www.fparcp.co.uk/>

GMC website: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/> and specifically: [Achieving Good Medical Practice: Interim Guidance for PA Students](#)

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